

Commonly Asked Questions for Foster Home Licensing

What will be required of us to become foster parents?

Background checks - everyone in the home age 13 or older must agree to a criminal background check. All adults ages 18 and older must be fingerprinted.

Home inspection - your licensing representative will come to the home for an initial visit. The licensing representative will walk through the entire property and any safety hazards will be addressed.

Medical - all household members must undergo a medical examination. The adults in the home must be tested for tuberculosis. School physicals for school age children are accepted in lieu of a medical examination.

Training - PRIDE is 27 hours and is usually offered in the evenings and on some Saturdays. There are 9 sessions and they are usually held once or twice per week, depending on the sessions you select.

What if I miss a session of Pride?

If you miss either of the first two sessions of PRIDE, you will need to stop and sign up for another time. You can make up any of sessions 3-9 at another location or when the class is offered again. You are cautioned however, as this greatly slows down the licensing process. If you miss more than 3 sessions of PRIDE, you must start over.

Are both parents required to attend the PRIDE training?

Yes, as both parents will be participating in the parenting responsibilities, both should be equipped with as much information as possible.

Is there an age requirement?

Yes, you and your spouse must be at least 21 years old.

Is there a maximum age to be a foster parent?

No, but the medical examination will determine if you are physically capable.

Can I become a foster parent if I am on disability?

The licensing representative will explore your disability and assess your ability to meet the child's needs. You may be asked to provide additional information from your doctor(s) as needed. The licensing representative may also request information about your source of income and your ability to meet monthly expenses.

Can my children share a room with the foster child?

Yes, up until a child reaches age 18, same gender children can share a bedroom. Everyone must have their own approved bed

Will our home need to be ready and equipped at the home inspection?

The licensing representative will complete an initial walk through of the entire property (including but not limited to bedrooms, out buildings and barns). The representative will discuss any compliance issues at that visit. You will have time to prepare your home while you are completing the application process.

Your home must have enough beds (no children are allowed to share beds). The bedrooms will be measured and this will help us to determine your capacity. The home should be ready to accept foster placements at the time of the final walk through just before issuing the license.

What if I have a criminal history?

You must discuss any criminal history with your licensing representative. Some criminal convictions will disqualify you as a foster parent. If you do not disclose your history, or that history of another family member, your application could be automatically denied.

What if we only want to do short term (respite) foster care?

The requirements are the same regardless of your intentions. This includes relatives, short term (30 days or less) foster care, long term foster care (more than 30 days) and adoptive care providers.

What if we only want to adopt?

The requirements are the same. We will identify you as an adoptive home only and you will not receive calls for any short term or long term foster placements.

Can I be licensed as a single foster parent if my spouse lives in another state and is not able to come back to Illinois for training?

No, all married couples and couples of civil unions must meet the background and training requirements.

Can I foster if I am single?

Yes, single (never married/ never civil union), widowed and divorced applicants may apply

Will I get paid to foster children?

You will receive a monthly check from the state to help offset the costs incurred of fostering a child. A portion of the monthly payment must be given to the child as an allowance. The board payment is not considered income.

Can I have pets?

Yes, but they must be child-friendly and meet licensing standards.

Can I have a swimming pool?

Yes, but it must meet licensing standards.

Can I own a gun?

Yes, as long as you comply with the licensing standards for storing the weapon.

What if I only want to take care of my relative?

If the child is placed in your home, we will expedite your application. If the child has not been placed yet, you will need to apply and you will be licensed for relatives only.

Should I be licensed with DCFS or a private agency?

The requirements are the same. DCFS and private agencies provided reunification services to the families and children in foster care. You may only be licensed with one agency.

What if I want to adopt a child from another state or country that I located on the internet?

The state where the child is located will need to request an adoptive home study through their Interstate Compact Unit. Often the home study is completed by a private agency and not DCFS. All private adoptions must go through a private agency.

Once licensed, can I transfer my license to another agency?

The agency must be willing to accept the transfer. The agency will consider your reasons for transfer.

If I took the PRIDE training in the past, do I have to retake it again?

Generally, if it has been more than a year since you completed PRIDE or since you surrendered your license (if licensed previously) you will need to repeat the PRIDE training.

What will be required of us as foster parents?

You must comply with the Foster Home Licensing Standards and the Child Care Act. You will be required to follow the Foster Parent Law, the Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities, and the rules regarding Sibling Visitation/ Contact. You must comply with any changes of the Foster Home Licensing Standards. You must support reunification of children with their birth parents under the guidance of the case worker.

Can I take the foster child to church with my family?

The religious beliefs and rights of the foster children shall be legally protected. Each child shall be given religious instruction and permitted to participate in religious services of their parents faith, unless there is written consent of that parent or guardian for the child to participate in religious instruction and to attend services of another religion. This includes consent to baptism or confirmation.

Do I and my spouse need to be US citizens to be foster parents?

You have to be able to pass the necessary background checks. The applicants must be in the United States legally. They must have a VISA with all necessary clearances.

Is day care available to me if I work outside the home?

The caseworker can assist with the employment related daycare. The foster parent will select the license child care facility of their choosing.

Can I have a day care license and a foster home license at the same time?

Yes, you would have to apply for the specific license and there are some difference in the forms and paperwork. Be sure to check with your licensing representative regarding these different forms.

Can the foster children travel with me if I travel out of state?

Yes, with the caseworker's written permission you may take your foster child out of the State for under 30 days. Any travel exceeding 30 days must be approved by the Area Administrator. Any travel out of the United States must be approved by the regional administrator.